

WASHINGTON- Joining other members of the Congressional Prayer Caucus, Congressman Akin decried the finding of a Federal Court that the National Day of Prayer is unconstitutional. U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb issued the decision in a case filed by The Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) that sought to strike down a 1988 law giving the President the authority to designate the first Thursday in May as a National Day of Prayer.

“This decision flies in the face of reason as well as our nation’s traditions and is yet another attempt by an activist court to subvert our national spiritual heritage,” said Akin. “Examples of calls to national prayer started with the Continental Congress and have been done approximately 135 times by President’s past.”

“It is a tragedy that such rancor has been fomented by some that are adamant in their contempt for bringing Americans of various faiths together during a day of prayer,” said Akin. “I am hopeful that the higher courts will exercise greater wisdom and overturn this petty attack against a wonderful shared spiritual heritage of prayer.”

Examples of past declarations for national prayer and fasting include:

- President Lincoln’s recognition of national prayer in his Proclamation of Thanksgiving on October 3, 1863. In the midst of the Civil War, Lincoln invited fellow citizens to pray and

reminded us that we are prone to forget the source of this Nation's blessings. He stated:

***I do, therefore, invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer to our beneficent Father, who dwelleth in the heavens.***

- The first Continental Congress made a similar declaration in 1777:

***It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive powers of these United States, to set apart Thursday, the 18th day of December next, for solemn thanksgiving and praise; that with one heart and one voice the good people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts, and consecrate themselves to the service of their divine benefactor; and that together with their sincere acknowledgments and offerings, they may join the penitent confession of their manifold sins, whereby they had forfeited every favor, and their humble and earnest supplication that it may please God, through the merits of Jesus Christ,...***

- March 16, 1776, the Continental Congress declared a fast:

***In Congress that Friday, the Seventeenth day of May next, be observed by the said colonies as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer;***

- Every President since 1952 has signed a National Day of Prayer proclamation
- There have been 135 national calls to prayer, humiliation, fasting and thanksgiving by the President of the United States (1789-2009)
- There have been 57 Presidential Proclamations of a National Day of Prayer (1952-2009)

Congressman Akin has joined an amicus brief in challenging the Federal Court's decision.